

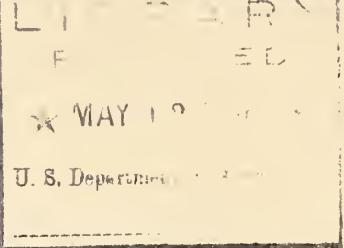
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SAFEGUARDING YOUR FOOD AND DRUGS -- No.9

Tuesday, April 29.



A series of radio talks by W. R. M. Wharton, chief, eastern district, Food, Drug and Insecticide Administration, United States Department of Agriculture, delivered Tuesday mornings at 10 a.m. Eastern Standard Time through Station WJZ in New York and the following other stations associated with the National Broadcasting Company: KWK, St. Louis; WREN, Kansas City; KFAB, Lincoln, Nebr.; WRC, Washington; WBZA, Boston; KSTP, St. Paul; WSM, Nashville; WAPI, Birmingham; WJAX, Jacksonville, WPTF, Raleigh and WRVA, Richmond.

My friends, the Federal Food and Drugs Act has been called by many eminent statesmen and jurists the most beneficent legislation enacted in the interest of the public in the last generation. It is because of the effective enforcement of this law that the foods you buy are essentially pure, wholesome, and truthfully branded, and that your drug supplies are of standard quality. In these radio talks I am relating some of my experiences in the public service in the enforcement of this law. I am telling you some of the things that have happened in the battle which has been waged for years and is being constantly waged now in the interest of protecting your food and drug supply. I have been telling you of these experiences for nine weeks now and I have also been telling you how to read food and drug labels, and friends, the Read-the-Label idea has become a sensation. The club women all over the country are discussing it seriously. The tradesmen have long since become familiar with the customer inquiry, "What does the label say?" Thousands have written for printed copies of the Read Label Information from my radio talks and scores of new letters are reaching us every day.

In a recent hearing before a committee of Congress, testimony was given to the effect that only 15% of housewives are discriminating buyers of foods. I think the estimate too low--but do you belong to the haphazard buyer class? If so, do you want to become a discriminating buyer? You can -- all you have to do is to learn what labels mean--learn how to read labels. Join the Read-the-Label Club of intelligent buyers of foods and drugs. No dues. No obligations. All you have to do is to learn to Read-the-Label.

This is the thing that I have been telling my radio audience over and over again for these many weeks. Will you not accept my invitation to make you an intelligent label reader and therefore a discriminating buyer by writing for my information now.

Today I shall tell you of a gigantic vinegar swindle, I shall tell you how a so-called cherry juice was made from the bark of the wild cherry tree, and I shall tell you more about how to read labels.

VINEGAR is a condiment in practically universal use in this Country. We find the familiar vinegar cruet on the table in every household. Vinegar not only furnishes an acid taste for the foods of those who are vinegar-minded, and those with sweet tempers as well, but certain kinds of vinegar also have a delicious aroma and flavor of their own derived from the fruits from which they are made.

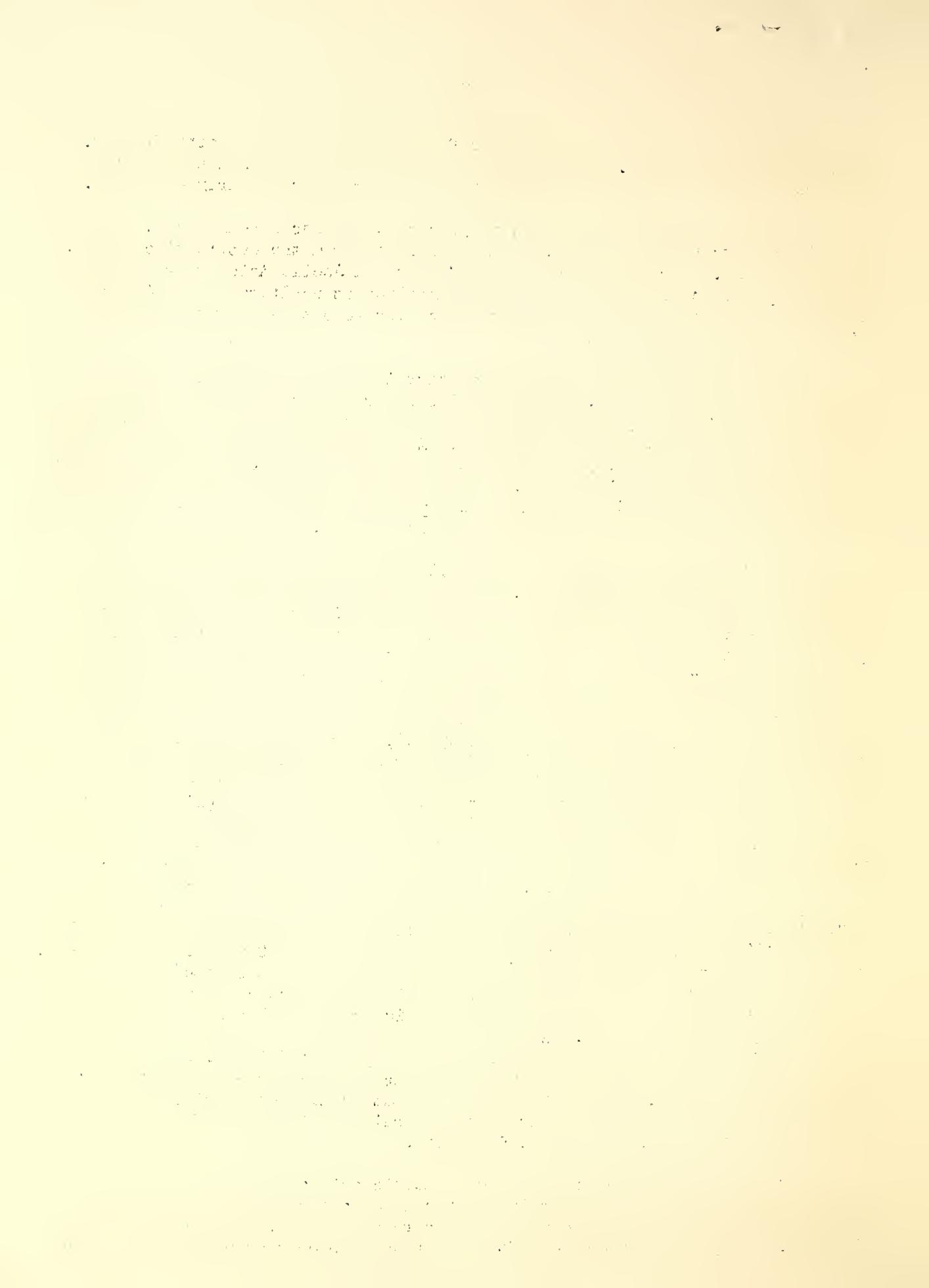
One kind of vinegar is known as Distilled Vinegar, or White Vinegar. This is made from Grain. It is sour, and that is all. It has none of the flavors and aromas which make Apple or Wine vinegar particularly desirable.

There is still another kind of product which has a sour taste, and that is commercial acetic acid, which is derived from the destructive distillation of wood. Distilled Vinegar and Commercial Acetic Acid are relatively very cheap and, consequently, suggest themselves as adulterants for Cider Vinegar - at least they so suggested themselves to one large supposed pure cider vinegar manufacturer.

In the course of a day's work of carrying out the enforcement of the Federal Food and Drugs Act, your present speaker had occasion to visit the plant of what was then, perhaps, one of the largest distributors of so-called pure Cider vinegar in the United States. A careful check-up was made of quantities of apples pressed, juice produced, resultant yield of cider vinegar and, to the amazement of the Inspector, it was found that the manufacturer had sold nearly twice as much cider vinegar as was possible of production - nearly twice as much as could have been legitimately manufactured.

A very careful inspection of the plant failed to reveal any distilled vinegar or commercial acetic acid, but your Inspector knew who the principal producers of these commodities were in the United States; so he made it convenient to carry his investigation into the main office of the plant. He proceeded to the office to examine the old box letter files which were still in use in this establishment. He reached for a file containing correspondence under "C", because he knew that a large concern, engaged in the manufacture of commercial acetic acid by the wood distillation process, had a firm name beginning with "C". When the file was opened, there on top of the pile of correspondence was a copy of a bill of lading showing the receipt of one hundred barrels of commercial acetic acid by the supposed cider vinegar manufacturer, and this shipment had been received just three days prior to that date. Thereupon the question was to find the one hundred barrels of commercial acetic acid, and this was not difficult when it was known that the product actually was then in the plant. The one-hundred barrels of commercial acetic acid were located in a warehouse, carefully concealed by being covered with a large pile of empty vinegar barrels. The file referred to also showed the receipt of other shipments of commercial acetic acid from the firm whose initial was "C". Then began a search throughout the United States for all of the cider vinegar products which the cider vinegar company had shipped. Some twenty-one different court actions were instituted, since chemical tests confirmed the adulteration with commercial acetic acid of all products, shipped as pure Apple cider vinegar. All of these twenty-one actions were successfully maintained in the Federal Court. They represented the seizure and condemnation of over thirteen thousand gallons of products all labeled "Pure apple cider vinegar", but adulterated with commercial acetic acid. Two prosecutions of the cider vinegar company terminated in pleas of guilty to violation of the Federal Food and Drugs Act.

One hundred barrels of commercial acetic acid equals five thousand gallons. Eighty per cent commercial acetic acid is twenty times as strong as vinegar. We have than the equal in acid strength of 100,000 gallons of vinegar. If added to apple cider vinegar after dilution to proper acid strength in the



extent of twenty per cent, we have the material in those one hundred barrels to adulterate one-half million gallons of cider vinegar. The monetary gain in such a practice is very large. The actions already referred to broke up this mammoth swindle, and this manufacturer went out of business. He declared himself a ruined man financially, and he told one of our inspectors that he would shoot that man Wharton, who was responsible, on sight. The former inspector, however, is still here, today to tell you this story to illustrate the actions which are being taken to safe-guard your food and drug supply.

I will now tell you about the sale of so-called cherry juice made from the bark of the wild cherry tree. Cherry juice has a large demand especially for the manufacture of cherry beverages. If someone could make a product at small cost which could be sold as cherry juice that someone would have a gold mine. It was tried, as you shall presently hear. Some little while ago, a certain individual conceived the idea that a decoction made from the bark of the wild cherry tree would taste like cherry juice, and so he made a decoction from the bark of the wild cherry tree, to which he added citric acid to give it an acid taste, and benzaldehyde to give it more flavor. He added sugar to make it sweet, and then he put in it a rich red artificial color which made it look like cherry juice. This product he put out on the market labeled "Sweetheart Cherry, a Combination of Pure Cherry Products", and his business was going along smoothly until your Federal Food and Drugs officer, in the course of the performance of his duties discovered what was happening and then trouble began.

A case was filed in the Federal Court, alleging violation of the Food and Drugs Act for the reason that the article was artificially flavored, that it was artificially colored, and that it was an imitation cherry juice. Misbranding too, was alleged since the product was labeled as "Sweetheart Cherry, A Combination of Pure Cherry Products", words calculated to deceive and mislead the purchaser in the belief that it was real cherry.

The originator of the scheme appeared in Federal Court. Did he contest? He did not. He entered a plea of guilty, and, of course, discontinued his illegal operations.

Here again, my consumer friends, is another instance, another example, another illustration of the way the enforcement of the Federal Food and Drugs Act protects you and safe-guards the purity of the foods you buy.

And now for my read label information. The product to be considered today is vinegar.

The standard strength for all vinegar is 4 per cent acetic acid. Cider vinegar or apple vinegar is a product made by the alcoholic and subsequent acetous fermentations of the juice of apples. Wine vinegar or grape vinegar is made in like fashion from juice of grapes. Malt vinegar is a product made by the alcoholic and subsequent acetous fermentations, without distillation, of an infusion of barley malt or cereals whose starch has been converted by malt. Sugar vinegar is a product made by the alcoholic and subsequent acetous fermentations of solutions of sugar, sirup, molasses or refiners' sirup. Glucose vinegar or corn sugar vinegar is a product made in like fashion from solutions of starch sugar or glucose. Spirit vinegar, distilled vinegar, grain vinegar or white vinegar is a product made by the

acetous fermentation of dilute distilled alcohol. Evaporated apple vinegar or dried apple vinegar is a product made by the alcohol and subsequent acetous fermentations of an infusion of dried apples.

When a product is labeled with the word "vinegar" alone, it is cider vinegar or apple vinegar.

You may find mixtures of these vinegars on the market. In such cases, labels will tell you what these mixtures are composed of, and if any artificial color has been added, the label will advise you of this fact. Many labels will declare vinegar to have been reduced with water to 4 per cent acidity. This means that the product has been standardized to a definite acid strength of 4 per cent acidity which is considered to be a proper and desirable acidity for table use. Reduced vinegar sells for a lower price than full strength vinegar not reduced.

My friends, don't fail to read the labels before you buy. In this campaign we are going to demonstrate that we know our buying business and we are going to make it worth the while of manufacturers to put more and more worth while information on their labels. Won't you join me in this effort? All you have to do is to learn to read labels and to apply the information you get to your buying. My friends, if you want to be smart buyers and if you want to furnish your table with choice foods, if you want to be a good provider, learn to read labels. You may learn by writing to W. R. M. Wharton, U. S. Department of Agriculture, 201 Varick Street, New York City, for copies of his radio talks on how to read labels.

Next week at this hour, I shall tell you a story about filching fish from firkins, and I shall have something to say about ambition pills, and I shall tell you more about how to read labels.

